

CLAIMS

1. A method of determining the shape of a dental prosthesis comprising the steps of:

5 a) scanning at least a connecting portion (14) of a preparation (10), wherein the preparation comprises a first anchor (12) and a connecting portion (14) connected thereto;

10 b) forming a physical model on the connecting portion (14) to produce a pontic (22); and

15 c) scanning at least the pontic (22) whereby the surface of the first anchor (12) is also scanned during a scanning step whereby the scanning steps can be carried out in either order.

15 2. A method according to claim 1 wherein, during a scanning step, the preparation (10) is scanned to provide data concerning relative locations of the first anchor (12) and connecting portion (14).

20 3. A method according to claim 2 wherein, data concerning the relative locations is used to align data obtained during the scanning steps.

25 4. A method according to any preceding claim wherein, in addition to producing a physical model of a pontic (22), connectors (22a,22b) which connect the pontic (22) to the first anchor (12) are also produced and wherein said connectors are scanned.

30 5. A method according to any of claims 1 to 3 wherein, connectors (22a,22b) which connect the pontic

(22) to the first anchor (12) are created by applying mathematical rules to data collected during the scanning processes.

5 6. A method according to any preceding claim wherein, data produced when the first anchor (12) is scanned is used to calculate an offset.

10 7. A method according to any preceding claim wherein, data produced when at least the connecting portion (22) is scanned is used to calculate an offset.

8. A method of producing a model of a dental prosthesis comprising the steps of:

15 scanning a preparation (10) having different features (12,14,16) to provide data concerning the relative locations of the different features within the preparation wherein the different features include a first anchor (12) and a connecting portion (14);

20 dividing a preparation into the different features (12,14,16);

individually scanning the different features (12,14,16) of the preparation; and

25 producing a model of a dental prosthesis by aligning data from the individual scans using the data concerning relative locations of the different features (12,14,16) within the preparation (10).

30 9. A method of manufacturing a dental prosthesis comprising:

determining the shape of a dental prosthesis according to any preceding claim; and

producing the shape of the dental prosthesis from a ceramic former.

10. A method according to claim 9 wherein, the dental 5 prosthesis is coated with porcelain.

11. A dental prosthesis produced according to any preceding claim.